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AMERICA'S FOREMOST FOLK MINSTRELS...

BAXTER 9

LES BAXTER'S BALLADEERS

ASHVILLE JUNCTION
DARLIN' COREY
QUE BONITA BANDERA
DUNYA

MY FISHERMAN, MY
LADDIE O
THE GREEN
MOUNTAIN BOYS

GOTTA TRAVEL ON
LET MY LITTLE LIGHT SHINE
SINNER MAN
JOY, JOY, JOY
BRANDY
SAIL AWAY LADIES



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LES BAXTER'S BALLADEERS

One of the most gratifying and encouraging occurrences in popular music in recent years has been the astonishing emergence of folk music as a potent force. In the past few years — and as the direct result of a phenomenal upsurge of interest in America's treasure-trove of traditional folksong, an interest that has been some two decades in its flowering — America's indigenous folk music expressions have risen to a place of deserved prominence. A whole generation of young Americans has been made aware of the strong, vibrant music of their forebears. Yet not only have they come to know and love the songs of our land, they have taken up the singing of them as well, to the ringing accompaniment of their own guitar and banjo playing.

The growth of folk music has effected a veritable revolution in our musical and entertainment habits (one might add cultural as well), emphasizing once again the force, beauty, integrity, and vitality that has always been at the core of all traditional folksong. The genuine folksong refuses to die, for it embodies for all time the values, aspirations and achievements of a people. Folk music is timeless, as true and viable today as it was on the day of its creation. Countless young people have come to an appreciation of the spirit, character and temper that shaped our land simply by singing its traditional songs. Having thus gained an awareness of where they have come from, our young people are then in a much better position to ascertain where they *are* and where they want to go. Folksong gives the individual an awareness of his identity, heritage and a considerably sharpened historical perspective. It performs a vital and significant function.

It is as a result of this widespread popular acceptance of folk music that composer-arranger Les Baxter in this forceful and compelling album is at last able to bring his formidable talents to bear on the hardy, vigorous songs of our soil. It is a project he has long desired to undertake, as his love and understanding of American folksong is as deep and penetrating as his appreciation of the more exotic song-lore of other countries, musical areas he has brilliantly mined in a long series of LP collections that extend all the way back to his early triumphs, *Music Out of the Moon*, *Sacre du Sauvage*, *Voice of the Xtabay* and *Tambool!*, among others — totaling some forty in all. These exciting albums were notable for the artful manner in which Les breathed new life into old forms and traditions, suffusing their simple, direct charm with the full power, sheen and luster of modern orchestration approaches. This cross-fertilization benefited both — the old and the new — for each strengthened and added to the other.

This applies equally to this fascinating and warmly ingratiating collection, for surely the simple force and direct communicative power of such old, revered songs as *Ashville Junction*, *Darlin' Corey*, *Let My Little Light Shine* and *Gotta Travel On* have been brought out and underlined perfectly by the sensitive, tastefully idiomatic and deceptively spare settings Les has provided them. His subtle, fresh and uncluttered arrangements more than demonstrate that he knows what the songs and the traditions are all about, for his re-workings of them are never obtrusive or over-embellished (temptations that far too many orchestrators fall prey to when arranging folksongs for group singing). Les, on the other

hand, perfectly understands that the essence of good folk music resides in its simplicity and directness of expression, qualities that would be lost in elaborate or over-ambitious choral settings.

"My idea in preparing this album," Les explained, "was basically to present a program of lovely American folksongs that I have liked and responded to. I wanted to give them the kind of treatment in my arrangements that would bring out the natural beauty implicit in them without in any way tampering with the essential qualities of the songs — the qualities that make them folksongs in the first place."

Les has been manifestly successful in this goal, for his appealing settings have energized and given body to the songs without once distorting their spirit or substance. The arrangements have, in fact, subtly enhanced the innate charm and loveliness of the selections — with no loss of the spontaneity and simplicity of musical expression that are so characteristic of folksong. His settings have done well what arrangements ideally should do: that is, render the content and substance of the songs meaningful and readily apparent to the listener. In his hands, these old songs — products of America's past — have been made thoroughly contemporary, yet without any betrayal of their qualities as traditional songs. Again, the cross-fertilization of the archaic and the modern has resulted in an intensification of both.

Much of the success for these exuberant performances derives from the skillful, authoritative singing of the group Les has assembled under his direction. The Balladeers are composed of a number of the finest young folksingers resident on the West Coast, all of whom have had extensive — though widely varied — backgrounds in folk music. The members of the group are Joyce James (who is heard as soloist on *Dunya*; *Que Bonita Bandera*; *Joy, Joy, Joy*; and *Sail Away, Ladies*); Terrea Lea (featured on *My Fisherman*; *Joy, Joy, Joy* and *Brandy*); Phil Campos (who solos on *Ashville Junction* and *Sinner Man*); Ernie Sheldon (solo singer on *Green Mountain Boys*, one of the two attractive songs he wrote for this collection, the other being the joyous *Dunya*); Paul Potash (solo voice on *Gotta Travel On* and *Brandy*); Jerry Yester (heard on *Sail Away, Ladies*); Michael Kollander; and Paul Hansen. The supporting instrumentalists are Allan Reuss, guitar; Mike Storm, 12-string guitar; Jerry Yester, banjo; Tony Reyes, bass; and Chico Guerrero, drums.

— John W. Peters

The songs are:

ASHVILLE JUNCTION	LET MY LITTLE LIGHT SHINE
DUNYA	GOTTA TRAVEL ON
THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS	SINNER MAN
QUE BONITA BANDERA	JOY, JOY, JOY
MY FISHERMAN, MY LADDIE O	BRANDY
DARLIN' COREY	SAIL AWAY LADIES

33 1/3 R.P.M.
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R-6064 A
(10.193)

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reprise:

LES BAXTER'S
BALLADEERS

1. ASHVILLE JUNCTION 3:17
(Baxter-Hansen) Bax Music Co./Sergeant Music Co. ASCAP
2. DUNYA 2:08
(Sheldon) Bryden Music, Inc. BMI
3. THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS 2:48
(Sheldon) Sausalito Music
4. QUE BONITA BANDERA 1:07
(James) Bax Music Co./Sergeant Music Co. ASCAP
5. MY FISHERMAN, MY LADDIE 4:20
(Robinson-Satt) Applesad Music, Inc. ASCAP
6. DARLIN' COREY 2:08
(Baxter) Bax Music Co./Sergeant Music Co. ASCAP

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(10,194)

reprise:

LES BAXTER'S
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1. LET MY LITTLE LIGHT SHINE 2:49
(Seeger) Sanga Music, Inc. BMI
 2. GOTTA TRAVEL ON 2:53
(Clayton) Sanga Music, Inc. BMI
 3. SINNER MAN 2:21
(Baxter-Holt) Chappell & Co., Inc. ASCAP
 4. JOY, JOY, JOY 1:45
(Baxter) Bax Music Co./Sergeant Music Co. ASCAP
 5. BRANDY 2:50
(Baxter) Bax Music Co./Sergeant Music Co. ASCAP
 6. SAIL AWAY LADIES 2:05
(Baxter) Bax Music Co./Sergeant
Music Co. ASCAP